Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of managing assertions comprising the steps of:

selling a pool of unallocated time available for assertions;

upon request, generating an assertion between a name and a public key, the assertion having a lifetime, during which the assertion is usable to provide an indication that the public key is associated with the name, and subtracting the lifetime from the unallocated time;

upon request, revoking an assertion and adding any remaining lifetime of the assertion to the unallocated time; and

eroding the unallocated time over time, by continuously subtracting additional time from the unallocated time independently of subtracting the lifetime of the assertion from the unallocated time, to thereby prevent the unallocated time from being maintained indefinitely.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) A computer implemented system for managing assertions between names and public keys, the system comprising:

a repository containing an unallocated time, the unallocated time indicating an amount of time available for assertions;

a client interface;

a purchase component operatively coupled to the client interface and to the repository, and adapted to add a bulk lifetime requested through the client interface to the unallocated time;

a request component operatively coupled to the client interface and to the repository, and adapted to, upon generation of an assertion between a name and a public key, the assertion having a lifetime requested through the client interface, deduct the requested lifetime from the unallocated time; and

a revocation component operatively coupled to the client interface and to the repository and adapted to, upon revocation of an assertion having a remaining lifetime, add the remaining lifetime to the unallocated time,

wherein at least one of the repository, the client interface, the purchase component, the request component, and the revocation component comprises a hardware component, and

wherein the unallocated time is eroded over time, by continuously deducting additional time from the unallocated time independently of the request component deducting the requested lifetime from the unallocated time, to thereby prevent the unallocated time from being maintained indefinitely.

4. (Original) The system of claim 3 wherein each assertion is a public key certificate.

5. (Original) The system of claim 3 further adapted to:

monitor when the unallocated time falls below a threshold, and

notify a user associated with the unallocated time if the unallocated time falls below the threshold.

6. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 3 wherein the request component determines whether the requested lifetime is greater than the unallocated time, and if the requested lifetime is greater than the unallocated time, presents a user associated with the unallocated time with a set of options for remedying the insufficiency of the unallocated time.

7. (Previously Presented) A processing platform implemented method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

maintaining an unallocated time, the unallocated time being time available for assertions between a name and a public key;

accepting a request for an assertion between a name and a public key and a requested lifetime during which the assertion is usable to provide an indication that the public key is associated with the name;

determining whether the unallocated time is greater than or equal to the requested lifetime;

upon determining that the unallocated time is greater than or equal to the requested lifetime, deducting the requested lifetime from the unallocated time; and

eroding the unallocated time over time, by continuously deducting additional time from the unallocated time independently of deducting the requested lifetime from the unallocated time, to thereby prevent the unallocated time from being maintained indefinitely.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 comprising the further step of forwarding the request for an assertion to an entity responsible for generating assertions where the unallocated time is greater than or equal to the requested lifetime.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the assertion is a public key certificate.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A processing platform implemented method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

maintaining an unallocated time, the unallocated time being time available for assertions, between a name and a public key;

identifying, from a request for revocation, an assertion between a name and a public key to be revoked, the assertion having a remaining lifetime during which the assertion is usable to provide an indication that the public key is associated with the name;

adding the remaining lifetime to the unallocated time; and

eroding the unallocated time over time, by continuously deducting additional time from the unallocated time independently of deducting a lifetime of an assertion from the unallocated time, to thereby prevent the unallocated time from being maintained indefinitely.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the assertion is a public key certificate.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable storage medium, the computer-readable storage medium containing instructions for:

generating an entry in a repository, the entry including an unallocated time available for assertions;

receiving a request for a purchase of bulk lifetime;

adding the bulk lifetime to the unallocated time in the event that a request for a purchase of bulk lifetime is received;

receiving a request for an assertion and a requested lifetime, the assertion being between a name and a public key;

deducting the requested lifetime from the unallocated time in the event that a request for an assertion is received;

receiving an identification of an assertion to be revoked, the assertion having a remaining lifetime;

adding the remaining lifetime to the unallocated time in the event that an identification of an assertion to be revoked is received; and

eroding the unallocated time over time, by continuously deducting additional time from the unallocated time independently of deducting the requested lifetime from the unallocated time, to thereby prevent the unallocated time from being maintained indefinitely.

15. (Previously Presented) A computer implemented system for allocating assertions comprising:

means for allocating a pool of unallocated time available for assertion validity;

a client interface;

means for processing a request received through the client interface for an assertion between a name and a public key, the assertion having a lifetime, the means for processing the request being operatively coupled to the client interface and to the means for allocating, and subtracting the lifetime from the pool of unallocated time;

means for processing a revocation of an existing assertion, the means for processing the revocation being operatively coupled to the means for allocating, and determining any remaining lifetime of the existing assertion and adding at least a portion of the remaining lifetime of the assertion to the pool of unallocated time; and

means for eroding the pool of unallocated time over time, the means for eroding the unallocated time being operatively coupled to the means for allocating, and continuously subtracting additional time from the pool of unallocated time independently of the means for processing a request subtracting the lifetime from the pool of unallocated time, to thereby prevent the pool of unallocated time from being maintained indefinitely,

wherein at least one of the means for allocating, the client interface, the means for processing a request, the means for processing a revocation, and the means for eroding the unallocated time comprises a hardware component.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 15 further comprising:

means for monitoring when the pool of unallocated time falls below a threshold, and for notifying a user associated with the pool of unallocated time if the pool of unallocated time falls below the threshold.

17. (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute a method comprising:

selling a pool of unallocated time available for assertions;

upon request, generating an assertion between a name and a public key, the assertion having a lifetime, and subtracting the lifetime from the pool of unallocated time;

upon request, revoking an assertion and adding any remaining lifetime of the assertion to the pool of unallocated time; and

eroding the unallocated time over time, by continuously subtracting additional time from the unallocated time independently of subtracting the lifetime of the assertion from the pool of unallocated time, to thereby prevent the pool of unallocated time from being maintained indefinitely.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute the method of claim 7.

20. (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute the method of claim 9.

21. (Cancelled)